

Washington, DC - "I am pleased to have this opportunity to come before the distinguished Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines to testify in support of a matter that is of great importance to the people of California's 39th Congressional District and to the nine and a half million people who live in Los Angeles County.

I come before you today in support of my formal request that \$2.7 billion be included in the reauthorization legislation for Federal Highway and Transit programs for Los Angeles County's Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Bus and Rail Capital Improvements.

I have had countless conversations with frustrated commuters who face this gridlock. Residents are primarily concerned about the valuable time they waste sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic. It is absurd that what should be a 15-minute commute, often takes two hours. This is just one example of the type of problems that LA County residents face on a daily basis. I want to improve the quality of life for all Angelenos by alleviating gridlock. It is essential that we find economical and environmental friendly solutions to solve this dilemma. This is why I am leading the effort to secure TEA-21 reauthorization funds for the Los Angeles County MTA.

The MTA operates one of the largest and most progressive bus and rail operations in the United States. On the average, 1.2 million passengers travel via MTA's buses and light and heavy rail during the week. However, more needs to be done to increase mass transit rider ship. Funds received through this process would give the LA County MTA the means to accomplish such a task.

As the nation's largest operator of alternative fueled buses, the MTA has led the way in acquiring and operating advanced clean burning compressed natural gas buses. The MTA's fleet of over 1,700 environmentally friendly buses serves as a national model of how, with the proper resources, buses can both reduce the congestion on our roadways and reduce the air pollution that harms the health of all Americans, especially our children and elderly.

With the resources I have requested from this subcommittee, the MTA can expand its fleet of clean burning buses and improve the technology employed by these vehicles. Through the reauthorization of TEA-21, the MTA will be able to replace approximately 1,200 buses.

In addition, the MTA will be able to expand innovative services, like Metro Rapid, which provides express bus service to tens of thousands of passengers on a daily basis.

With three different rail lines and with an additional line being added later this year, the MTA will need major financial resources to cope with the considerable capital costs involved in running a first class rail system. For example, the operating cost alone for these four rail lines in 2004 is projected to be over \$220 million. And these costs do not include the major funding that will be needed in the coming years to replace aging rail cars.

Clearly, the Federal Government has an interest in enhancing the MTA's bus and rail systems. By reauthorizing funds for the Los Angeles County MTA, you not only show support for the

environment but also for keeping down long-term costs to repair federally funded highways.

I want to thank the members of this Subcommittee for your consideration of my request. I also have submitted several other requests for support of transportation improvements, including road and bridge reconstruction, new buses, and road repaving. These requests were submitted for consideration via the Subcommittee's website and represent other worthy efforts that will address the congestion dilemma.

I look forward to working with you and Members of the full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to ensure that the reauthorization legislation that is crafted by the 108th Congress meets the major transportation needs faced by my constituents, the residents of Los Angeles County, and their fellow Americans."